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# Curtain Time

THE best notices in the Broadway production of "The Trial of Lee Harvey Oswald," which opened last Sunday night at the ANTA theater in New York city, were reserved for the director, Tunc Yalman, who is artistic director of the Milwaukee Repertory theater.

The play itself, by Amram Ducovny and Leon Friedman, was panned by the three New York newspaper daily reviewers, as "puny drama," "suspenseless" and "necessarily flimsy." The playwrights posed the question of what would have been revealed in the trial of President Kennedy's alleged assassin had he avoided Jack Ruby's fatal bullet in the Dallas police station.

In the course of the stage trial, the Warren commission testimony is reviewed, with use of giant photo prints, movie clips and expert witnesses. Oswald finally gets his say at the end of the two act play, claiming that the president was shot by pro-Castro Cubans and that he was involved only as a stool pigeon for the CIA. No guilty or not guilty finding is made — the audience is treated as the jury, to mull it over from the evidence brought out.

Although the script was roundly flayed, there was some praise for Yalman's direction. Typical was the comment of Jack Gaver, UPI drama editor, who wrote, "In view of the nature of the play, it is difficult to fault Tunc Yalman's direction. There just wasn't much he could do about it." John Chapman of the New York Daily News wrote, "The physical part of the production is the best part of the evening."

What happens at a symphony orchestra rehearsal when something goes wrong with the music? The conduc-

tor smashes his baton in half on the music stand, right?

Wrong — for most American conductors, anyway. The reason, according to music critic Robert C. Marsh of the Chicago Sun-Times, is that good batons are hard to find, and one that fits the conductor's standard of weight and balance is almost as prized as a fiddler's fiddle.

Baton making is almost a lost art, and in the United States it never did flourish, according to Marsh. Toscanini smashed them often, but he favored a heavy type that could be supplied through commercial channels. A good baton comes from light, hard wood, which must not whip or snap on a firm downbeat.

Generally speaking, the commercial batons are too heavy and badly balanced. The top conductors get theirs in Europe, and even those don't fully satisfy the owners. George Szell of the Cleveland orchestra, for example, shapes his with a sharp knife and sandpaper block until the batons fit his touch.

Note to Milwaukee World Festival officials: The Philadelphia Bicentennial Corp. has appointed Gordon Hiker, artistic director of Expo 67's World Festival of Entertainment, as its consultant for entertainment and the performing arts. Hiker worked four years to line up artistic talent from 62 nations for Expo 67 — the greatest assemblage of performing arts in history.

The Philadelphia bicentennial will be held in 1976, eight years from now.

"We are working this far in advance," said the corporation chairman, "because we can formulate unusual and comprehensive plans which we believe we can execute with elegance and distinction."

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